



One intriguing juxtaposition between law enforcement and “traditional roles” for women is apparent when Lofton does laundry and pulls wet clothes out of the washer, sometimes finding bullets rolling around in the bottom of the machine. When not corseted by the familiar weight of her bullet-proof vest, she feels like something is wrong, missing. She finds herself exiting her Nissan pick-up or any car in the same sequence of moves as she was trained to use on the job. And, for Lofton, laundry fresheners like Febreze® serve a very particular purpose: “When I get in my patrol car the morning after arresting a drunk driver, the car can smell like a stale drunk, like alcohol. Sometimes I need to clear out the smell of someone I’ve arrested.”

Lofton also works job fairs to encourage women to make the same career choice she has. There’s a stereotype about the kind of women attracted to law enforcement work, perhaps brash or hard-muscled. Lofton doesn’t fit the stereotype and wants women to see it. When in uniform, she hears little girls ask their mothers, “Mom, can women be police?”

They can. And are. ●

Montana Highway Patrol is accepting applications for troopers this month. People interested in applying can call 1-800-PATROL, email mhp@mt.gov, go to their local job service, or check out our website: doj.mt.gov/enforcement/highwaypatrol.

>> Jenna Caplette is a freelance writer in Bozeman.

BALANCE

a magazine for montana women

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